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Brief Memorials

OF

LORD LYTTELTON

Brief Memorials

OF

LORD LYTTELTON

Brief Memorials of Lord Lyttelton

THREE SERMONS

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH AT HAGLEY

On the First and Second Sundays after Easter, 1876

I

BY THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD

II

BY THE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

III

BY THE REV. FITZHERBERT A. MARRIOTT

With a Biographical Sketch

CONTRIBUTED BY

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE

(*Reprinted from* THE GUARDIAN)

BODLEIANA BIBLIOTHECA

RIVINGTONS

WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON

and at Oxford and Cambridge

1876

100. w. 500.

A power is passing from the earth
  To breathless nature's dark abyss :
But when the great and good depart,
  What is it more than this !

That man who is from God sent forth,
  Doth yet again to God return :
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
  Then wherefore should we mourn ?

Wordsworth.

TO

LADY LYTTELTON,

AND TO THOSE DWELLING IN AND AROUND

HER HOME AT HAGLEY,

THESE MEMORIALS, AS PUBLISHED BY HER DESIRE,

ARE NOW DEDICATED

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

OF A NOBLE LIFE.

PREFACE

IT is only as being entrusted with the manuscripts of those, with whose names his own is but accidentally associated, that it falls to the writer of the third sermon, to say the few words which seem to him needful and fitting on the publication of these brief memorials.

One is already well known; and, satisfied with the kind assurance, that the sermons have answered the immediate purpose which the authors had in view, they cannot but feel how very imperfect they must appear, were they to be regarded by the public as any attempt even faintly to delineate such a life and character as that which was in their mind.

It will at once too be obvious to any reader of the last of these, that it could not have been addressed to any congregation but that one, in its own retired village church, close to that home, the thought of which then united all hearts as the hearts of one family.

Yet the publication could not be withheld, when desired by one who wishes thus to possess them more permanently, and to preserve them not only

for relatives near and far away, but for friends embracing too wide a circle, to admit of private circulation.

They may at least serve one purpose of the authors, as a token of their deep sympathy with the living, and as a sincere acknowledgment of what they owed to Lord Lyttelton in his lifetime, and of the feelings with which they cherish his example. For God, in removing him from our sight, makes us more sensible of the light in which it has shone, now that it is reflected in our memories, as the clear shining of the sky, on which, when the sun is set, the eye is wont to rest.

CHADDESLEY VICARAGE,
May 12th, 1876.

I

Death an Event in Life

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH AT HAGLEY

ON THE

Morning of the First Sunday after Easter

APRIL 23, 1876

BEING THE MORROW OF THE FUNERAL OF GEORGE WILLIAM, LORD LYTTELTON

BY

JOHN FIELDER, BISHOP OF OXFORD

HIS CHAPLAIN

CHANCELLOR OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER

He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up his head.
Unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness.—*Psalms for the Day.*

SERMON I

DEATH AN EVENT IN LIFE

✠

S. James iv. 14.

What is your life?

I HAVE ventured to separate this question from the answer given in the Sacred Text, because I desire to ask it in a somewhat larger sense than that which makes for the Apostle's immediate purpose. He is speaking of the world's business, of its engagements and plans, and of the foolish confidence in which we make them. "To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain." We make no doubt of our power to act upon these purposes, our skill to complete each small device, and our capacity to enjoy each pleasure we have planned. Many times, indeed, we "rejoice in our boasting," congratulate ourselves that we can do so much, that we can live so hearty and joyous a life, without misgiving or fear. "All such rejoicing," the Scripture tells us, "is evil." It is a wrong habit of mind; and it is founded on a

forgetfulness of facts, which every day's experience ought to have made it impossible for us to forget. The world goes on with its plans and engagements, as if life would last for ever. So it is needful for us to be reminded that life is but a "vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." Whatever further answer we give to the question, "What is your life?" this, at all events, is true, sadly true. How easily the most vigorous life passes away! A few days' fever; a few degrees of cold sharper than it has been wont to feel; a slip of the foot; a stumbling horse; a little more work than the brain or the heart can bear; and the life has vanished—vanished, perhaps, when the need of it was the sorest, the beauty of it at its best. The vessel was sailing on a summer sea, a fair wind blowing, a rich and noble freight on board, when the pirate Death bore down upon her, despoiled her of all her treasure, and sunk her beneath a fathomless sea. Great men, the stability of their times, leaders of thought and action, brave pioneers of a nation's progress; wise men and scholars, with the accumulated store of a life's study just matured before it perished for ever; sadder still, the strong man labouring for his little ones' bread, cut off before their eyes —father, husband, brother, taken, while a company of poor helpless mourners was left. Who has not seen such things? Who has not wondered at these strange providences? Who has not longed to read the riddle with which they perplex us? Brethren, there is only one light by which it can be read. I call to mind

words written by the hand that is cold in yonder grave, in connection with such thoughts as these. "Providence," he wrote, "is stranger than revelation." "The constitution of man, his life and his death, would be far more inexplicable to the thinking man without the light which the Gospel sheds on them, than they are with it." Surely this is most true. If this frail life be not part of a larger—of an infinitely larger—existence, what is it? What comes of all this toil? Why should all this care be bestowed on the perfecting of a man's character, and the improvement of his spiritual and mental gifts? What is all this marvellous and multiform energy of a great life, if it is to be extinguished in a moment, and for ever? In regard, indeed, to these plans for journeying to and fro to buy and sell and get gain, these poor concerns which do not look beyond the interests of commerce or of pleasure, life *is* but a vapour, true enough. But is it nothing more? The Gospel, my Christian brethren, has a larger and better answer to give, as true as that brief answer which follows the text, but more complete. We are keeping our Easter festival; and while we lift up our voices to-day, as we have lifted them up through the week that is past, to assert before men, and in the sight of Heaven, our faith that Jesus Christ is risen indeed, we do at the same time assert that this our life is but a fragment of that whole existence which belongs to us, in right of our creation, by the mercy of God. You heard the Apostle's saying, read to you in the Lesson just now, that "if in this life only we have hope in

Christ, we are of all men most miserable." I do not pause to ask in what sense the Apostle spoke of that misery then; for there is a misery, which we too must experience in the mere ending of life, as life does sometimes end, if there be nothing beyond. Not only are we Christians miserable, in that our faith has made us victims of a special delusion, but we are sharers with the whole race of mankind in the wretchedness of living a life that is to die out with its best gifts half used, its noblest purposes unfulfilled. Holy Scripture, not only as it is read to us at Eastertide, but all the year round, frees us from this misery, while it teaches us God's truth about the resurrection to eternal life.

With this truth, it has given us a word of exhortation too: "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Brethren, I know that when that message is delivered, it sounds in the ears of many like a hard and almost impracticable direction. It seems to say, when it is not rightly considered and understood, "You must not set your affections on the things around you, which are so constituted as naturally to draw them out; your true life is something apart from your present being; you must abstract yourselves from what is mixed up with evil and sin; if some work is to be done here, it must be done only so far as necessity obliges you; with the great world in which you are outwardly living and moving you have nothing to do." Such a view seems to make our life contemptible, and to disparage all our work

in it. It discourages any keen, warm interest in the things around us, as if this life were too worthless to care about, and we had best forget it altogether, while we lift our eyes and hearts above. There have been Christians, and good Christians too, who have taken this view, and have exaggerated these principles, turning all their lives into a series of ascetic exercises, condemning every pleasure, refusing to take part in any earthly enterprise, that every energy of their souls might be devoted to that which relates exclusively to the world beyond. But does the Gospel teach us this? Dear Brethren, I venture to say that this is not the teaching of the Gospel of Christ. Consider the exhortation which I read to you just now, "Set your affections on things above;" but read on to the end of the passage. What saith the Apostle? "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him;" not "abstain from doing," but "do all to Him;" not, "give up the world's duties and occupations," but "undertake them in a higher spirit by a higher power." Your life is hidden indeed, as the Scripture says, hidden in its source and springs, welling up from a depth no human eye can reach, and having its perennial outflow in the world beyond. But it is a series of acts to be done now, hour by hour, as time passes on; and each particular act is to be done, so to say, in a Divine atmosphere, under the influence of a holy presence, by the power of a hidden, supernatural life of grace in the soul of man. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." He doeth it now, and he

will continue to do it in a higher state of being; doing it, he will abide for ever. Even if this state be only a preparation for another—and I think that this view has been sometimes too exclusively dwelt upon—how can we better prepare for another world than by doing each act we have to do in this world well? Do we know that other world so thoroughly, can we so precisely frame to our minds the form and fashion of that future existence, as to be sure that we are justified in setting aside this world's energies and duties for something which we assume to be a true counterpart, or foretaste, of the life to come? Are we satisfied that we so exactly reproduce the very image of things unseen, that we can confidently put it in the place of all we know, and do, and form a part of now? Or do we not rather observe that Holy Scripture, in its very descriptions of that world, borrows its imagery and forms of expression from this? The gates of pearl, the street of gold, the walls of the city that were garnished with all manner of precious stones; these are the elements of that glorious vision which dazzled with its magnificence the eyes of the disciple whom Jesus loved. And as we borrow from the language of this world's wealth similitudes of the glory that shall be, so when we try to set our affections on things above, it must be through the exercise of affections that rest first on things below. That we may love God whom we have not seen, we must love our brother whom we have seen. When by God's grace we try earnestly to prepare for life eternal in the heavens, it must be by earnest, holy living here on

earth. You know the story of a great preacher, whose name is widely honoured now, though not as he intended or would have wished it to be, how he was asked one day what he would do if he were sure that he would die to-morrow. "Just what I am going to do now," was the substance of his reply.[1] Is not this the true philosophy of a religious life for the circumstances in which most of us have to live? Is it not an answer, partially at least, to the question in the text? And may it not be partly for this very reason that the life of the world to come is kept so much out of our sight? We know little more of it than that it is exalted above all human thought and knowledge. If we knew more, we might be led to put aside what lies immediately before us, and to spend our time in the contemplation of a far distant future, finding this world unpalatable and impracticable, lost for all purposes of useful action to the daily service of Christian life.

If, then, in answering the question, "What is your life?" men assert that the true life of Christians is such that it cannot be reconciled with the performance of duty, and with the discharge of that service to others

[1] Mr. Wesley was once asked by a lady, "Suppose that you knew you were to die at twelve o'clock to-morrow night, how would you spend the intervening time?" "How, madam?" he replied; "why just as I intend to spend it now. I should preach this night at Gloucester, and again at five o'clock to-morrow morning. After that I should ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I should then repair to friend Martin's house, who expects to entertain me, converse and pray with the family as usual, retire to my room at ten o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in glory."

which they ought to render, I say that the answer is false. I think I have proof of its falsehood, and you have proof, in the memory of the life to which the thoughts of so many among you go back to-day. You all know what he was in the performance of daily duty, how careful and accurate in the particulars of it, how scrupulous in doing that which belonged to his station in the world, or to the places and honours he held. He made it his business to do this world's duties well, very well, as well as he could. Some know much more than this. They know, however imperfectly, what he was in respect to that inner life which is hid with Christ in God. A very few know what humble thoughts he had the while of that life which he tried so earnestly to live. Let me quote to you his own words; it is more than thirty years since he wrote them: "Let us think," he said, "often of death, and let us think of it as it really is, not as the end of our life, but *as an event in our life.*" Are they not remarkable words? You know how often he said and wrote the like short, terse sentences, with no embellishment, no illustration, but such as came of close reflection, under the guidance of good sense and clear judgment, nothing added to the words which were necessary to express his thought. Such a saying was this! It furnishes us almost with a "text" in itself, with a view of life and death, which it is good for us to dwell on. For we too, though in a lower sense than the words bear in the Scripture, are made "after the power of an endless life." And if we will but think thus of life, and of death as merely an event in it, how mar-

vellously all things fall into their places. A sickness has come upon you; you note the symptoms and circumstances of it, its increase or abatement, and then the gradual restoration of health; you give God thanks for the recovery, and mark it as a chapter in the biography of one who has so fallen sick and revived. Another illness comes, with the like symptoms, but with no recovery; you do not call it an event in life, but life's fatal close. Would not a last sickness wear a different aspect if you could think of death as only an event in life? For indeed there is danger in that habit of judging all the events of a man's life, as if they found their complete account in the closing scene. We have seen lives passed in utter disregard of all claims of duty to God and man, and then because the last day of life was cheerful, and the sinner could repeat a verse of a hymn he had learned in childhood, we have heard a triumphant verdict on the man's character, a boast that he had died so happily, as though it were a sure proof that he had lived well. It was kindly and piously intended of that moralist who sent the message in his last hour to his careless kinsman: "Come and see how a Christian can die." It was well meant; but it had been better for the young man to have been brought to consider how the departed Christian had lived. The end of life may be overshadowed by some dark cloud; so we sometimes see it in the order of God's providence, but we are not overmuch distressed; we ask, "What was the man in life?" What would the life of the man have been whose thoughts were truly expressed in that saying I

have quoted to you? He would be very careful in the discharge of all known duties, not only of high public functions, but of dry and common details, desiring to do each particular act as well as he could do it. He would have a keen sense of responsibility for each word and deed, and yet be conscious that the growth and formation of his own moral character was of greater importance than any particular action, touching the great future of an endless life. Such, I verily believe, was the life of him by whose grave we stood a few hours ago. Surely that life has not passed away, cannot pass away. It is precious in memory, abiding in influence, imperishable in love.

I look back over more than thirty years, and feel that to me, as to many others, his presence in the public or private life to which we belonged was distinctly a power for good, a help against unworthy conduct, a standing condemnation of all that was dishonourable, narrow, or untrue. How fair and candid he was in discussion! How just in estimating others' actions, how kind in making allowance for them! How fearless when a false public feeling was to be resisted or exposed! What good or useful enterprise did he ever fail to aid? What public or private duty did he ever refuse to do? I do not speak here of that rich culture, whose fruits so many of us loved to taste; of wide sympathies with learners and teachers in the broad field of English education; of hearty interest in distant homes, the cradle of another England in the coming time. These were but the fringes of his life, rich and pleasant as they

were to see. Deeper than all these lay the firm faith of a Christian man, the generous love that followed each dear child along the dangerous path of youth with wise and thoughtful care, which they will never forget; that counted no member of his household unworthy of his help, the Sunday school not too simple a sphere for his labour through long years of his active life. And ever amidst all these cares, affections, and duties, we seem to hear an inner voice saying from time to time, "*Let us think often of death.*"

Dear Brethren, I know that the words have at first a sad and dreary sound, a sound of vaults and monuments, and cold, dark resting places of buried corpses, where we bow the head, and hush the voice, and tune our meditations to sad recollections of what we have lost. But they will lose this dreary cadence, if you say them as he said them, "Let us think often of death;" if you go on to say with him, "Let us think of it, not as the end of our life, but as an event in our life." The dreariness is gone. We forget the graveyard and the tomb, except for the sweet memories that hover there, and we think of a solemn event, for which all men lift up their hearts in gratitude to God, who has so ordered a noble life that it may go on for ever. No; these words, which I have asked you to remember when you leave the church, must never have a dreary sound *here.* Fresh blades of grass will grow upon that grave; the summer sun will shine upon it soon, and then by and by the red leaves will fall, and make a soft rich carpet all

around it in the brief autumn day. And the memory of a brave, true-hearted Christian man will spring out of that grave too; the feelings of warm affection, kindled many a time by his acts of benevolence while he lived, will glow again as the remembrance of them comes back to grateful hearts.

Our brother has departed in God's faith and fear. May he rest in peace; and may we have our perfect consummation and bliss with him in God's eternal glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

II

The Glory of the Spiritual Body

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH AT HAGLEY

ON THE

Evening of the First Sunday after Easter

APRIL 23, 1876

BY

THOMAS LEGH, BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

Our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY.

Phil. iii. 21.

SERMON II

THE GLORY OF THE SPIRITUAL BODY

✠

1 Cor. xv. 42–44.

So also is the resurrection of the dead.
It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:
It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory:
It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:
It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

THE Apostle here compares the glory of the resurrection of the dead, not seen as yet, with that quickening of the seed sown in the ground, which, because we see it regularly and continually, we are apt to set down as a process of nature, forgetting the glory and the power that are manifested in it.

And yet these manifestations of the Divine power and glory in all things that we see around us are part of the teaching which God has ordained for us. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Yes, my Brethren, we may say of the mystery of

the sowing of the incorruptible seed and the raising of the incorruptible, "the day shall declare it." The glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by His death hath destroyed death, and by His rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life, enables us to look forward, through these gathering clouds of unbelief, to the day when these weak, corruptible, dishonoured, natural bodies shall be raised immortal, glorious, strong, spiritual bodies, to dwell in God's presence for ever and for evermore.

First, then, observe, the resurrection of the dead, or rather, the body concerning which we hold that doctrine, is sown in corruption, just as the seed of all plants which are propagated by seed must die if it is to fructify; that is its nature; it can only bring forth fruit by death. So God has ordered it. And we are permitted to trace many wise purposes of its being so ordained. I will not speak of those purposes which have reference to this life now present, and the sustaining of the works of the world; but I will only suggest how this ordinance of decay in the seed keeps the sower in constant dependence on Him who alone can quicken it.

But it is raised in incorruption. That which comes out of death is life. Out of the grain we sowed, when it has gone through the ordained process of decay, comes life with tenfold vigour; the original life enlarged, prolonged; in the case of the natural body, prolonged for ever. Yea, the seed we cast into the ground, in faith of the operation of God, brings forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, some a hundred.

Secondly, it is sown in dishonour, i.e. valuelessness. Of what value is a seed—a mustard seed, a grain of wheat? Hundreds, thousands are dropped, devoured of the fowls of the air, trodden under foot. It is sown in valuelessness, a thing of no account. But it dies; and then, ah! then it comes to life again, a beautiful tree in whose waving branches the birds build their nests: or an ear of wheat, such as you may have seen grown in those Southern or Eastern climes, where growth is more luxuriant—a very granary of food for the fowls, for cattle, for men. Or look at the cornfields, ripe for the harvest, when they are waving in the wind; as the Psalmist saith, when the valleys stand so thick with corn that they seem to laugh and sing—whether we look at the separate produce of a single seed as illustrating the multiplication of life by death, or on the yellow plains and hillsides bringing forth the treasures of plenty, must we not confess that that which was sown in dishonour is raised in glory? As we gaze on them, we seem to understand the vision which the prophet saw in that valley full of dry bones, when bone came to his bone, and they assumed the form and lineaments of men, and at his word the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Dry and bleached on the ground, they were dishonoured; restored to life again after the image of Him that created them, they were exceeding glorious.

But, thirdly, the resurrection of the dead is sown in weakness. We are passing from the comparison of

the seed into the contemplation of the thing signified. Decay and dishonour, and their opposites, apply more especially to the seed; these two latter, strength and spirituality, and their opposites, to the body. Let us so consider it. It is sown in weakness. Oh! the degrees of weakness—the forerunners of total weakness—to which the physical frame, and all that is bound up in it, is subject. Oh! the disorders, or distempers as they are called, when the strength of man is utterly paralysed, or all the wholesome juices of the body poisoned by being diverted from their natural courses. Oh! the aberration of the mental faculties, when the delicate sensibility of the organs of thought is disturbed by some sudden violence, or long pressure of anxiety, or sorrow, or overwork, so common in these days, or over indulgence, still more common, and more fatal! Oh! the approach of absolute weakness or final prostration through any of these causes, as that which we call death comes on; and when it is come, oh! the witness it bears to the vanity of the most perfect and glorious of all the things which God had created, even of that which was made after His own image! Truly, when every fibre in the body has lost its tension, and every pulse has ceased to beat, and every member has lost its power that was given it for the well-being of the whole wondrous organization of which it was a part, then, as we behold it, we understand the full meaning of those words: It is sown—the body is sown—in weakness.

But, thank God, it is raised in power. After the resurrection we shall be equal to the angels. When

our Lord said that, He meant that our relations one to another, the affinities of the new state of being into which we are passed, shall be like unto the love and mutual dependence or mutual help which the holy angels have one to another; or it may mean that our bodies, now subject to the laws of space and motion by which this present world is regulated and sustained, shall be released from such limitation and restraint; and our relation to God Himself, described in Scripture as carried on by the instrumentality of angels, as it is written of little children, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven," shall be totally altered when we ourselves shall see His face. So saith St. John, "We know not yet what we shall be; but this we know, that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

In what power shall this poor weak creature man be raised! what strength these bodies shall acquire! That speed which the wings of angels represent; that might which Michael the Archangel put forth in rescuing the body of Moses from the power of Satan; Speed, might or strength; beauty, that expression or conformation which in the features of God's faithful servants here on earth outshines what we call plainness or disfigurement, or the loss of the ordinary elements of beauty or proportion through age or infirmity; the beauty of the spiritual body, a presence which testifieth of the Spirit of God animating an organised frame—this is the idea of the power of the natural body when it shall be raised a spiritual body. But

for our faith, that thus and thus it will be—that these poor weak bodies, subject to corruption, dishonoured as regards the uses of this world, deprived of all strength, shall be raised incorruptible, glorious, endued with new powers, adapted to a new and more glorious existence—how could we bear the anguish, the unutterable distress of these partings with men so widely esteemed and honoured, so dearly beloved, under circumstances most strange and terrible!

The Lord of life Himself, touched as He was with the feeling of our infirmities, held forth this hope to the sisters at Bethany whom He loved, as the true and sufficient remedy for their sorrow, "Thy brother shall rise again!" And Martha's answer, though she knew not the full scope of His meaning, expressed her perfect reliance on that hope, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." What though she, believing, saw the glory of God straightway, and His resurrection power put forth to restore her lost one to her side, yet how far beneath the joy of the regeneration, at the final restitution of all things, must such joy as she felt be counted to be!

"What! would we have our lost ones back again, to walk with us once more along this weary road, bearing the burden of manifold infirmities, vexed, harassed, weighed down with cares and anxieties again, as they must have been had they continued with us! And shall we not embrace, as altogether wisely ordained, and far better both for us and them, that they sleep on now and take their rest, delivered (as we said it yesterday) from the miseries of this

sinful world—waiting, as the souls under the altar still wait, the fulfilment of all God's gracious designs for His chosen, till the number of His elect shall be accomplished. I say to you, most dearly beloved in Christ, that it is far better. Undoubtedly it is part of the daily burden of grief and pain which we still must bear, to wait until the end for the solution of this mystery of human suffering in those so near and dear to us, who were part of ourselves, who on their part regarded us in like manner; who would not consciously have caused us even a moment's pain or anxiety, so tender was the tie that knit them to us in Christ the Lord.

But it is surely far better to wait for the time when all shall be made clear beyond the possibility of a doubt; when we shall know even as we are known; when we shall no more dwell apart, as here we do even from those we love best, each separate soul in its own separate sphere of joy or woe, because of this veil of the flesh which hides, as it ever must hide, the inner consciousness of the embodied soul; when, beloved, that change shall have passed upon us which is described in the text; when this corruption shall have been exchanged for incorruption, the dishonour that attaches to the earthen vessel for the glory of the spiritual being, the weakness of this sinful flesh for the power and might that are in the blessed angels. Yes; we shall be equal to the angels, being the children of the resurrection; we shall behold God's presence in righteousness; we shall be satisfied when we wake up with His likeness. Satisfied! I take

that word in the fulness of its meaning: no longing, lingering desire left; no sense of imperfection; no wish nor hope unfulfilled; a blaze of glory, which we can even gaze upon and live; our dwelling place the eternal city, in whose streets the nations of the saved, as they walk, do converse, not of things that happened in this weary world, but of God, and light, and love, and of that Name so mystical and strange, by the power of which their salvation was accomplished and their accuser cast out; even the Name of Him who in the days of His flesh was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who bare in His bosom the rebukes of many people; yea, who cried out in His pangs, "Thy rebuke hath broken my heart. I am full of heaviness. I looked for some to have pity on me, but there was no man; and for comforters, but found none." What wonder if the servants of such a Master should have sorrow for their portion, or have to seek comfort in that saying: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Beloved, there are other words I might have spoken; but I cannot. It would scarce be just to the memory of one whom I deplore in common with you all, whom I loved in common with you all—to say one single word even of respect and love more than he would have permitted had he been with us still—still, as he was, in his simple, unpretending kindness, manliness, virtue, thinking always of others, least of himself, shrinking from no labour for those whose welfare he sought to promote. I may not speak of him thus

to-day. Far less would I attempt to intrude into that hour of thick darkness, when the light by which he had walked all his life long was quite obscured; when he failed to see the tokens to which he had ever taught others to look for guidance; even as the rays of light are all confused and distorted to one that is colour-blind, so to him for one brief moment were the laws of right and wrong, of truth and love, by which he had ever lived and thought and spoken. He leaves behind him those whose lives while they live, and whose deaths when they come to die, will reflect his teaching, his noble example, all that he said and did ere that unrest seized him and tare him; up to that moment when, in an agony which no human power could soothe or control, he passed out of our sight, until?—yes, thank God, there is an "until." It is written: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." Fathers, children, brethren, sisters, husbands, wives! albeit in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, yet after a heavenly and spiritual manner may the love that bound together in one the whole Christian family be renewed in the regeneration, even though the heavens and the earth that are now shall be no more remembered nor come into mind, with their unutterable sadnesses, with their terrible agonies. For is it not written again: "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Amen.

III

The Return Home from the Grave

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH AT HAGLEY

ON THE

Morning of the Second Sunday after Easter

1876

BY THE REV.

FITZHERBERT ADAMS MARRIOTT

VICAR OF THE NEIGHBOURING PARISH OF CHADDESLEY CORBETT
IN THE DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

"God buries His workers, but carries on their work."

SERMON III

THE RETURN HOME FROM THE GRAVE

✠

John xx. 10.

Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

THOUGHTS the same, yet changing, like the shadows and lights of spring, meet us here to-day as last Sunday. We cannot forget them; we would not if we could. For Christian sorrow waits as naturally for its promised joy as watchers of the night look for the coming dawn; and that which is sad while the eyes are shut, becomes joyful when they are open, without any other change.

So it was with the sorrowing disciples. Grief at first blinded their eyes, and they could not believe what seemed to them only too good to be true. But, one by one, they had their eyes opened: they "saw and believed." And then to the spiritual sight of faith again all that had been dark was changed, and melted into light.

So, too, we again behold the grave, round which we so lately stood as mourners; only now we think rather

of that sepulchre from which those first disciples returned with tidings of their risen Lord: and it is His voice which falls on us as an undying revelation of our hope in death; "I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Thus, in this holy Eastertide we muse on the light of life and joy which broke forth from the darkest cloud of sorrow and of death that ever, in the whole world's history, fell upon this earth.

Blest season of hope, full of immortality! it comes, and will come, again and again, as sure as winter passes into spring, till Christ Himself shall appear in the great Easter of the resurrection of the just. Then all whose life was hidden in Him, shall come out of their great tribulations, and stand with Him on that eternal shore, where "there shall be no more sea,"[1] safe in the haven where they longed to be, waiting only to pass, as the one family of God, into the many mansions of their heavenly home.

Meanwhile our rest is not yet. Our life here below is still upon the waves of this troublesome world. But amidst its cares and toil, its trials and its bereavements, we have an earthly home as a refuge and a rest, with all its quiet duties and purifying sympathies.

And as a week ago, when a listener here with you, the undercurrent of my thoughts of you was that gently strengthening word of our Lord, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;" so now you remind me of those disciples of

[1] Rev. xxi. 1.

old, who from mourning by the grave of Christ were the first to learn the glad tidings of that Easter morning, and one after another "went away again unto their own home."

Let us first think a little of that home. It was but a temporary refuge. Indeed, the Greek word speaks not of what we usually regard as our "home," but of those[1] who in the love of Christ loved one another, each better than themselves, making any place in which they sojourned what we have no other word so adequately to describe. So our translators again represent the beloved disciple as taking the Virgin Mother "to his own (home)."[2]

What a home was that, where the sanctity of the mother of Jesus, and the pure love of St. John embraced, with the sympathy they learnt from their Lord, the penitent Peter bedewed with his bitter tears, and the contrite Magdalene, who loved much, as having many sins forgiven. We are not told much, in express terms, of what passed in the sacred retirement of that home, and we must think, and still more speak, of it with reverent caution. Yet, as we muse on the Gospel story, together with the words of heavenly consolation with which Christ had sought to support them on the very eve of the great trial of their faith, can we doubt what it was on which they communed together, and how they would comfort one another with those words? For it was St. John who preserved them to us in his Gospel. The several messages which one and another brought with loving haste, were all wrapt

[1] πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς. [2] εἰς τὰ ἴδια. John xix. 27.

up in the angel's words, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" "He is not here; He is risen." And when once they were assured of that, it is scarce any human fancy of our own if we imagine how those words of comfort would spring up, so fresh in their memory of that last discourse when He spake of a great sorrow to be turned into joy. "Had He not told us" (we can scarce refrain from imagining the words as actually repeated by them) "what we have been strangely slow to believe, that He should indeed rise again on the third day; that He would not leave us comfortless, He would come to us; a little while we should not see Him, but again a little while and we should see Him?"

How often His words, far reaching into eternity, have some present fulfilment, sooner than longing hearts expect! Had He not said, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you"? For our very love of Him, should we not indeed rejoice that He should go unto His Father? And with all this present comfort, hath He not cheered us to meet every coming trial with a holy courage: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

And we in our turn muse on all this, till we seem to contemplate some home that scarcely belonged to this world in which we move and live. But this is hardly the way to read its lesson truly. It speaks to us of Christ's faithful servants in all the slowness and infirmity of their faith. It shows us how they were

men of like passions and like weakness with ourselves, that we may not be discouraged when we return back from searching trials to the common duties of our daily life—from learning comfort in our sorrows, patience in suffering, and cheerfulness in the work God may yet give us to do in His service.

May I then speak to you as Christian disciples going back to your own home? your several homes I indeed mean, but one especially, which has long been as a home influence upon those around it, for he who was so long the head of it, was one who, while loving his home, dwelt in a loving spirit among his own people, as his own, of whom one lately said to me, "he was a father to us all."

For the sake of all these, let me put aside the reserve, which it is yet difficult to break through, and speak of a home, so sacred in its sorrow, in the light of that home of old, which in its diviner aspect pictures to us the very infancy of the Church of Christ, while in its human aspect it represents a home of Christian mourners visited with the dawn of heavenly joy.

You see how the first Easter shed its light of joy upon that home of Apostles. And it has ever been a characteristic of God's teaching, to interpret the voice of His providences by the revelations of His Gospel; to bring His Word home to our hearts in the experiences of life, to blend the old with the new, the human with the divine, your Church life with your home life. And you have your lesson to learn from those first Christian disciples, who lived as it were

between the holy sepulchre and a home of their own, bringing messages of joy from the grave, wherein for a brief space they had deemed their fondest hopes were buried, going to and fro, full of human sympathies and heavenly consolations, and then bracing themselves for the work God had in store for them, by the very joy of the Lord strengthening them.

You know how this church, in its restored[1] beauty, will ever be associated with that home on which it seems to shed the light of its consecration to God. And both will recall to you blessed memories of the past and present, of joys chastened by sorrow, and of sorrow passing into joy, all gathered up in the light of his life, who being dead yet speaketh to you; speaketh more tenderly and impressively than even by his living voice.

And it is by his life, rather than any words of my own, that I wish to speak to you; that is by an example of singular beauty and completeness. It is one which appears to have shone before men in its own quiet yet wide-spreading light of humble, cheerful, untiring duty—all the more noble in its very simplicity—till one dark cloud fell upon him, in God's mysterious providence, to pass through it, we doubt not for an instant, into the very Light of Christ in which he walked on earth.

From among such memories of the past, if only to impress on you the duty of teaching others by

[1] The restoration of the Church was carried out in 1857, in token of the affectionate and high esteem with which Lord Lyttelton was even then regarded throughout the Diocese of Worcester.

example, through experience of its far-reaching power, let me tell you of one source, though in the distance of years long gone by, of the peculiar influence of that life which is but now removed from our sight.

You know, from often looking at those marble tablets under the church tower, the name of William Henry, Lord Lyttelton, the father of him whose example ought to prove our best compensation for his loss. In the fragment of a letter written by him to a friend from Oxford, probably while not far beyond the very prime of his manhood, he sketched in clear bold outline his idea of a Christian layman's example, destined to be realised long after in the visible lineaments of his son's character.

"Every man's light," he then wrote in words I must now abbreviate, "ought to shine before men; nor is he justified in hiding his candle under a bushel, unless it be in danger of extinction from the corruptness of the air around him. But many fly from the laborious discharge of this duty under pretence of flying from the temptations of the world; and some are either so infatuated or so hypocritical as to condemn all promiscuous intercourse with their fellow-men. Yet of what service is the talent buried in the ground? Why plant a fruit tree in the desert, whose blossoms shall be scattered to the winds, and whose unplucked apples must perish on the stalk?

"Being thus fully of opinion that in the world we must live, and being also convinced that not only we ought ourselves to be pure, but, like salt, should

leaven the lump, it remains to consider by what means we can render ourselves most generally useful.

"We may do this by example, by precept, and by our personal services; that is, by holding offices instituted for the public good, and by assisting others with money, advice, and whatever other relief we can individually afford them. And I conceive a layman (for I am giving you a religio laici) is much concerned with both precept and example—with precept at certain times, with example always. But most men, lawyers, scholars, statesmen, and others, leave all the work of God to the clergy, as if the armed and hired soldiery alone, and not every liege subject of the king, was bound to defend his interests.

"Men attend to example, and form themselves by it, who spurn reproof. For your example (I mean that of a modest Christian, not that vain one of a stoic or ascetic) is lovely, and ingratiates itself with all who behold it. It upbraids no man, it exposes no man; but if it finds fault with others, it is negatively, at least, by not applauding, by not imitating their manners. Yet the contrast is too strong to be overlooked, the merit too conspicuous to be unobserved, too dignified to be despised. And you have at least, the heavenly hope of engaging by its quiet persuasion men scared at the seeming austerity of religion, men whose vanity forbade them to lend an ear to admonition."

If such was in his early life the father's portraiture of a Christian layman, what a priceless inheritance must his training have been to his son, to children,

and their children after them. Oh, may it be even to generations yet unborn!

And does not a heavenly hope, like that of which his father thus wrote, appear to us reflected on the dark cloud of this mysterious death! even as, when coming to say a few words of sympathy with him in whose place I stand to-day, I saw, on that day that bowed our heads in woe, a heavy rain-cloud hanging over the slope of the hills; and then the sun, just hastening to its setting in the west, set, as by the finger of God, His "bow in the cloud,"[1] the left sweep of its bright arch falling, like a ray of mercy, on the home of him so suddenly removed from us in darkness, but a darkness which the sunshine of faith may yet kindle into a light of hope and joy; for such is the light of his whole life, witnessing to his abiding faith in Him, Who is the true "Light of the world."

And when passing up the hill overlooking this church and that house, both alike your home, there was outspread before me another of nature's parables, which I cannot forget. That home was still in shadow, while gradually a soft evening glow crept over the green slopes, till all around was light. No sound fell on my ear; there was a solemn stillness, as if all life were hushed awhile. And I thought of One who loved to speak in parables, ever quick to interpret the lesson of what met for the moment His disciples' eyes.

It seemed to me to have a parable for that grave, and a parable in that life, both precious in our eyes.

1. It has a parable for that grave, where, your life

[1] Gen. ix. 13.

long, you will love to behold the spot where his body of mortality patiently will wait the day when, with those whom he so dearly loved and lost awhile, it shall be clothed with immortality. For there, though we seek not to fathom God's mysterious dispensation, may we not draw comfort from the very darkness which surrounded the Cross of Christ? It was as an outward token of that awful agony, which He took on Himself, in pledge of victory to all such as might suffer any like anguish of mind, if only by faith and love still one with Him, though in the midst of darkness; the mysterious feeling, even where the reality was not and could not be, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The secret things of God, then, we leave in reverent awe with Him whose "tender mercies are over all His works," content to inscribe as it were upon that grave God's own word of blessing on one, whom the prophet describes as "forsaken and grieved in spirit:" "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer."

2. And there is also the parable of a life, as a shining light, round the shadow on that grave. And if on such an occasion, though for the time I ought to cease speaking, loving hearts will not count minutes, may I remind you of the bearing of all this on the future of your own life—the lesson you may carry in your hearts as Christian disciples passing from the solemnity of this deep affliction to the every-day

duties of your home, and the work and the trials which may be before you.

God is apt to repeat Himself wonderfully in His providence. As cloud heralds cloud, so it has passed into a proverb that trials rarely come single; and often what is heavy at the time is found to have been a preparation for a greater. And the more experience we have of them, the more we learn not to rely too much on the power they have to purify our hearts and lift them up at the time, unless we keep also a steadfast purpose to carry out their influence into our future life.

Yet should we make much of them as they come, for they quickly pass by, and use them as a help to lift up our hearts.

We are not able, indeed, in our present infirmities, to take in the joys of the world unseen. But God gives to all who seek Him special visitations, when the soul is carried beyond the region of transitory things, and lays its hold on the things which are eternal. As there are days in the natural year, when a heavenly beauty seems reflected on this lower creation of God, so there are times when the spiritual world seems to become as though manifest to us, through a veil, in visions of its glory. When purified by suffering, or chastened by sorrow, the soul rises above earth, not in the mere dream of a passing enthusiasm, but through its affections being set on things above, it sees light beyond the valley of the shadow of death, and thirsts for a life "hidden with Christ in God." The pleasures of earth seem but as

faded flowers, and you long for the day when you shall put away childish things.

But these feelings, though they may be good in their place, are not abiding in themselves, though they may be in their fruits. For Christ prayed,[1] not that you should be taken out of the world, but that, living in it, you should by faith overcome it; and while you should not value them too little, you should not trust to them too much. To turn them to our real good, we should be led by them to seek gifts of God that are still more precious and needful, the daily cleansing of the soul by the blood of Christ, and its gradual renewal by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

Yet with these, great may be the blessing of a sorrow such as yours, if you make of it a companion. It will turn from being a memory to be a presence, as of a familiar friend—a presence recalling all that is holiest and happiest in the past, to shed a refreshing dew upon the heart.

So as thousands mourn with you, so thousands rejoice with you, in that the life which is removed from our eyes is a treasure that no man can take from us, a legacy to all, an epistle known and read of all men; shrinking indeed from all display, but witnessing the more truly to Christ; notable as fulfilling the difficult lesson of a twofold precept, in doing nothing to be seen of men, yet letting its light shine before men; remarkable, as it seemed to me, in nothing more than in his utter unconsciousness of its being anything remarkable.

[1] John xvii. 15.

Far be it from me then to speak one word as if in praise of him. It would be equally unbecoming in me, and unsuitable to the memory of one, in whose presence any rising thought of praise would not have found expression from the lips. But reserve may not hinder us from helping one another to read aright the story of his life, of which one chief characteristic was the way in which he made his home the centre and the refreshment of a laborious service, and the source of an expansive charity to all around him, far and near, witnessing doubtless to the hidden spring from which it really flowed. It seems something like the spirit and the outward discipline of those first disciples of Christ, the fishermen of the Galilæan lake, who, in the alternation of brave hardy toil with the duties and sympathies of their homes upon the shore, were being trained, ere they knew it, to become Christ's fishers of men.

A true fisher of men, too, was he, who in working *for* all became a pattern *to* all, high and low, rich and poor, for he could touch life at many points, and in every station; making himself a servant to all, and showing to the least the true dignity and worth of the humblest work, if "done as unto the Lord."

He has taught men of high degree diligence, courage, and singleness of purpose in their work, and to be mindful of their homes, and of their brotherhood with the poor, and so to bear their burdens as to fulfil the law of Christ.[1]

He has taught pastors of souls to make time for much which we are apt to leave undone for the want

[1] Gal. vi. 2.

of it, in these days of multiplied and busy work; and to look for the recompence of a reward, that casts into the shade all that tempts us here.

He has taught all how the business of their worldly calling, though dry in itself, may bring down a dew on their spiritual life, if they set about it cheerfully as a duty to please God in the service of men.

He has taught you how a habit of persevering industry helps to regulate the mind; how work apparently absorbing need not distract it, if strengthened by daily devotion and self-discipline; how the commonest duties may add strength to the prayers which strengthen you for them; how to live in the world, yet above it; keeping your life really in the eternal world by a daily effort to realise it to yourselves in communion with the unseen, and not least in remembrance of the blessed dead; daily conforming ourselves to the pattern of those who best reflect the mind that was in Christ — in a word, to connect heaven with our home, and our home with heaven.

This is the secret of a happy life, chiefly in making others happy; disinterested, lowly, forgetful of self, but a shining light to others, as his whose course was fulfilled, we doubt not, rather than cut short. His time was in God's hand. He who gave, hath taken away. It is His will that is done. And in His will is our peace. If He speaks to us "out of the cloudy pillar," the light is there. The light of a Christian life is one in which we may rejoice, because it has witnessed among us to that Light which knows no setting.

May we all so walk in the same light, as to know Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. May you, the children of your father's house, rise up and call him blessed. For God hath been mindful of you, and He shall bless you, as, walking in his steps, you may live unto God, and at last be gathered with him into that home above, where joy and gladness shall abide, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, since from that home you shall go out no more.

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UBI DICTURUS EST DOMINUS DOMÛS,

MIGRA,

ET QUANDO DICTURUS EST, NESCIS:

PARATUS ESTO.

DESIDERANDO DOMUM ÆTERNAM, PARATUS ERIS.

Augustine.

A Biographical Sketch

[*Reprinted from* THE GUARDIAN]

BY the death of Lord Lyttelton a career of singular excellence has closed in a catastrophe of gloom not less singular.

The constant rule of his life was an unrepining acceptance of the Divine Will, and a manful effort to fulfil the law of duty. It has now been ended by the action of an impulse foreign alike to all his past and all his latest thoughts and feelings, yet too powerful for the means of resistance which remained to his shaken and enfeebled system.

Born in 1817, he was educated at Eton and Cambridge. These two periods of boyhood and of youth were not less distinguished than they were bright and joyous. In 1839 he married Mary, the younger sister of Sir Stephen Glynne, who died in 1857. In the circle of their twelve children there was no void until the spring of last year, when, after a lengthened illness, the constitution of his youngest daughter gave way to typhus fever. After passing nearly twelve years as a widower he married the present Lady Lyttelton, and leaves several young children. He had very recently

completed his fifty-ninth year, when on Wednesday, the 19th of April, the event occurred of which the particulars have been made known through the public journals.

Lord Lyttelton's was a life of remarkable and of very diversified activity, which sprang directly and solely from a sense of duty, and was sustained by a healthy delight in its performance. Nowhere was he better known than in the world of scholarship and the beloved and ever-cherished studies of his youth. In these he attained an eminence which has rarely if at all been surpassed. But his name was likewise familiar in the spheres of politics, of social philanthropy, and of religious effort. As a Churchman, he was decided but independent; as a Liberal, he was moderate, from his balanced mind, but never lukewarm. His lofty integrity not only lifted him far above jobbery and intrigue, but kept him free from every proceeding associated either with faction or with passion. He held the office of Under-Secretary for the Colonies in 1845, and of Chief Commissioner of Endowed Schools from 1869 to 1874, when he was deprived of it. In these two capacities he was a paid servant of the Crown for a very limited period. But through a course of nearly forty years, since he became Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire, his time and energy were constantly applied to all the interests—social, moral, or religious—either of the general or of the local public. Devotion of such a kind, little known except in this country, has rarely even in this country been carried so far. It went, perhaps, up to the point

of undue indifference to his private and personal interests. It was rewarded by the regard, the affection, and, indeed, the reverence of the community and the county in which he lived.

It would too much lengthen these remarks to attempt any enumeration of the subjects and undertakings in which he took an interest. Locally, indeed, he gave himself to everything in which there was a public object to be gained. In the wider sphere where he could allow himself a choice, he energetically promoted colonisation on what he deemed a sound basis, and he became a principal founder of the settlement of Canterbury in New Zealand, which not many years back he visited. His mastery, and his energetic handling, of the subject of public endowments, will, it is probable, greatly redound to his reputation in future times. It is difficult to speak of his character, whether personal, domestic, or religious, in terms of measure. It was in the highest degree child-like, and in the highest degree manly: a manner occasionally blunt veiled a temper of remarkable sweetness. He gave his talents and his energies to grave and serious ends, his lighter moments not less freely to social entertainment, in which he excelled, to fun and humour, and to bodily sports, in which he took great delight, especially on behalf of his sons. But whether in the exercises of his religion, or in the discharge of business, or in social or corporal relaxation, he was equally and entirely modest, truthful, natural, artless, genuine, and his loving nature throve alike under the alternate discipline of sorrow and of joy. And those who knew

his life best and longest are able thankfully to record that, with his happy temperament, and his high unswerving principles of action, it was an unusually bright, genial, and joyous life. Its genial colour was not in the slightest degree affected, nor was the performance of his daily duties ever interrupted, by the few fits of dejection with which at very rare intervals it was chequered. Even in the latest and by far the worst of them, his perception of duty and his self-resignation, and love to the Giver of all good, were in full action to the last days of his life. Even in those days he felt, but he repelled, condemned, and repeatedly mastered, the impulse which he knew to be upon him rather than in him, as an alien and guilty thing. If "unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness," in that light he is now surely walking; and they who loved him, looking backwards over and beyond the crisis of an involuntary paroxysm, have cause to be deeply thankful not only for the noble example he has left, but for the ample measure of healthy happiness in this world, as well as of humble hope for another, which he was permitted to enjoy.

W. E. G.